

Now Reservists and National Guardsmen and women are coming home to a weak economy and record unemployment levels. Eighteen percent of recently separated servicemembers are currently unemployed. They are disproportionately feeling the pinch of record gas prices, housing foreclosures, and food costs.

We have all heard from constituent servicemembers who have returned home to find their families in financial disarray. Many reservists took a pay cut from their regular jobs to serve overseas; others find that when they are discharged, if they can find work, they are returning home to lower salaries—in many instances, lower than their combat pay. Twenty five percent of servicemembers returning from Iraq or Afghanistan earn less than \$25,000 a year. Some veterans are driven to homelessness—the VA estimates that there are 1,500 homeless veterans of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The means test has a particularly adverse impact on servicemembers. Most servicemembers receive higher compensation in the form of combat pay and have fewer expenses while serving abroad, but upon leaving service they face lower incomes and higher expenses. Because the means test factors in a person's income and expenses for the six-month period preceding the bankruptcy filing, a veteran's income is artificially inflated and expenses are inaccurately low. As a result, veterans risk having their chapter 7 case dismissed and being forced to file under the stricter chapter 13.

The men and women of the National Guard and Reserves have risked their lives to protect us. If servicemembers, through no fault of their own, end up in bankruptcy, they deserve protection from Congress. This bill brings us one step closer to providing them with financial relief when they come home from their service.

I would like to offer my heartfelt thanks to Chairman CONYERS and Subcommittee Chairwoman LINDA SÁNCHEZ for their commitment to and work on this bill and to the minority Committee Members for working with us to find a compromise and get this bill on the floor today. And again, I thank my colleague Congressman ROHRBACHER, whose passion and persistence on this issue have made him a wonderful ally.

EDWARD BYRNE MEMORIAL JUSTICE ASSISTANCE GRANT PROGRAM AUTHORIZATION

SPEECH OF

HON. MARK E. SOUDER

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, June 23, 2008

Mr. SOUDER. Madam Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 3546, a bill to authorize funding for the Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant Program at fiscal year 2006 levels—\$1.095 billion—through 2012. As a cosponsor of this legislation, I know the critical importance of Byrne-JAG funding to law enforcement, and especially drug task forces, throughout the United States. Many of us remain deeply disappointed that the program's FY 2008 appropriation was cut so drastically at the end of last year.

Byrne JAG provides needed funding to drug task forces throughout my district. For exam-

ple, the Allen County Drug Task Force relies on this program's funding to continue its work with the FBI, DEA and ATF targeting drug traffickers. As does the Indiana Multi-Agency Group Enforcement (IMAGE), a drug-enforcement team combining select law enforcement from DeKalb, Noble, Steuben, and LaGrange counties. In 2006 alone, IMAGE worked on 101 drug and prostitution cases, and seized illegal drugs valued at nearly \$3 million. These results speak for themselves, and they demonstrate how critical it is to the safety of Hoosiers in northeast Indiana, as well as Americans nationwide, that the Byrne JAG program is fully-funded.

I was very upset when Congress cut Byrne-JAG funding by 67 percent last December in the FY 2008 Omnibus Appropriations Bill. If the House doesn't act quickly to restore this key funding source, law enforcement programs throughout the Nation will certainly be reduced—or eliminated—likely reversing hard-won gains that have been made over the years at the local level.

We have an opportunity with the FY 2008 Supplemental Appropriations bill to correct that mistake, and I strongly urge the House to accept the Senate language restoring Byrne-JAG funding for the current fiscal year. This measure is necessary in order for local law enforcement agencies to continue their constant pursuit of criminals, especially drug dealers. We will be taking a major step backward if we don't accept the Senate's proposal. The long-term effects of such a move are dangerous.

As we enter the general appropriations season for next fiscal year, I also urge the Appropriations Committee, and the House in general, to fully fund this program in FY 2009. The Byrne JAG program is a proven success that strongly deserves reauthorization, and I urge passage today of H.R. 3546.

GOSPEL MUSIC HERITAGE MONTH

SPEECH OF

HON. BARBARA LEE

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 24, 2008

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express support for a resolution designating September as Gospel Music Heritage Month. This resolution recognizes the legacy of gospel music for its invaluable and longstanding contributions to the musical traditions of the United States.

Let me begin by thanking Representative JACKSON-LEE of Texas, the Recording Academy, and the Gospel Music Channel for all of their support to pay homage to this influential and inspirational genre of music. Gospel music is truly an American classic that's gone far too long without being recognized for the significant impact it's made on our culture.

Whether it's swaying with the choirs, tapping along with the quartets, or simply raising hands to the rhythm of soul-stirring crooners, gospel music is a cornerstone of the American musical tradition. Gospel music is more than the sounds that resonate in congregations on Sundays; it's the musical thread that has woven its influence throughout religious and secular musical genres including rock and roll, country, and rhythm and blues. From Ray Charles and Elvis Presley to Aretha Franklin

and Dolly Parton, many of America's greatest recording artists emerged through the historical art form of gospel.

While gospel may have its roots based in the African-American traditions of Negro spirituals, its reach has spanned not only across the ages, but it has grown beyond its established audience to achieve popular culture and historic relevance across the globe. With its use of choral singing in unison and harmony, Gospel has emerged as a distinct category of popular song, with its own supporting publishing and recording firms, and performers appearing in sell-out concerts nationwide.

This resolution allows Members of Congress to celebrate gospel's rich heritage and honor musical pioneers from the likes of Mahalia Jackson and Sandi Patty, and the Hawkins Family, very own constituents: Tramaine, Edwin and Walter Hawkins. Additionally, it allows Members of Congress to pay tribute to this important American legacy and the role it plays in the lives of millions.

Since Thomas Dorsey first stretched the boundaries to create gospel music, choirs, quartets, and powerful vocalists have been singing this same song, albeit in different styles and places. Gospel is here to stay, and I urge all of my colleagues to join me in supporting this measure to honor the gospel community, and create a month designated to annually acknowledge the "good news" it represents.

MEDICARE IMPROVEMENTS FOR PATIENTS AND PROVIDERS ACT OF 2008

SPEECH OF

HON. GENE GREEN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 24, 2008

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of HR 6331. This important piece of legislation will delay the physician payment cut, which is scheduled to go into effect on July 1.

It has been over a decade since the physician fee schedule was put in place to help control increases in Medicare payments to physicians.

The Medicare program reimburses physicians who treat seniors using a complex formula that is based on a number of factors.

Unfortunately, payments for physician services matched the SGR and expenditure targets for only the first 5 years.

Since then, the actual expenditures have exceeded the target by so much that the system is no longer realistic.

As we have learned in recent years the formula reduces payments to physicians when the economy goes down—a time when doctors are least able to absorb the extra costs.

These payment reductions have caused many physicians to hold off on accepting new Medicare patients, withdraw from the program, or retire altogether.

In areas like mine that rely heavily on Medicare and Medicaid, we probably will not be in a situation where doctors stop taking Medicare.

Rather, we will see access problems created by attrition—where the gap created by physician retirements is not filled by new crops of doctors willing to take Medicare patients.

If we reach that point, Medicare will have failed in its mission to provide equality in access to health care for our senior citizens.

Twice we have tried to pass legislation to address the physician payment cut and these bills were vetoed twice by the President.

H.R. 6331 will delay by 18 months the 10.6% physician pay-cut in Medicare reimbursement rates due to take effect July 1 and will give physicians a 1.1 % payment update for 2009.

This bill is not a long term solution to the physician payment and SGR problem, but it does give Congress time to revamp the program.

CREDIT UNION, BANK, AND
THRIFT REGULATORY RELIEF
ACT OF 2008

SPEECH OF

HON. MAXINE WATERS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 24, 2008

Ms. WATERS. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 6312, The Credit Union, Bank, and Thrift Regulatory Relief Act of 2008. I am particularly pleased to speak in favor of this legislation because I have always been a strong supporter of credit unions. These institutions have been effective in pursuit of their mission to serve people of modest means and underserved communities, both of which characterize much of my district. Regulatory improvement in this industry is long overdue and I want to thank Mr. KANJORSKI and Mr. MOORE for their work on this bill.

Credit union regulatory relief is especially urgent in light of the nation's current financial crisis. We are either at the brink of a recession—or already in one—largely because of the crisis in the subprime mortgage market that has led to a wave of foreclosures unlike any since the Great Depression. In significant part, this crisis resulted from certain financial institutions, many of them largely unregulated, peddling dangerous mortgage loan products to borrowers who did not fully understand the risk they were taking on. Meanwhile, the lenders themselves whisked their own risk to the four corners of the earth via securitization and the secondary market. Much of the Financial Services Committee's work in the past year has involved working to enact legislation that prevents this from ever happening again.

Notably, credit unions did not help to create this mess. Indeed, analysis of 2006 home mortgage disclosure data reveals that credit unions were far less likely than other lenders to make subprime loans to low and moderate income households, especially minorities.

So credit unions were not part of the problem. But they can and must be part of the solution. If there is any lesson to be learned from this crisis, it is that low or moderate income households and residents of underserved communities don't just need access to any credit, but rather access to sound and appropriate financial products. Credit unions stand ready to provide such products to more people and more communities, but need Congressional action to do so. Specifically, H.R. 6312 would allow credit unions to extend their services to areas with high unemployment rates and below median incomes that are generally underserved by other depository institutions.

Critically, it would also allow some people who don't belong to a local credit union nonetheless to go to that credit union for short term loans, as an alternative to the exorbitant rates charged by payday lenders. This is progress in achieving the outcome policymakers must pursue in the financial services sector, namely, connecting households of modest means with the soundest financial products and institutions available to them.

I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

TRIBUTE TO CAPTAIN LEE
VANDEWATER

HON. TOM LATHAM

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 25, 2008

Mr. LATHAM. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize CPT Lee J. Vandewater of Winterset, Iowa who was honored by the Central Iowa Chapter of the American Red Cross for his heroic efforts serving in the Iowa National Guard overseas, earning him a Bronze Star.

Captain Vandewater served as the 1st Platoon Leader, Company B, 168th Infantry of the Iowa National Guard. While serving overseas, he commanded a nine-vehicle convoy carrying 30 soldiers along the Afghanistan and Pakistan borders. Insurgents ambushed the battalion and Captain Vandewater commanded his team to safety and returned with three other men to successfully rescue four stranded soldiers. For his efforts, Captain Vandewater was awarded the Bronze Star Medal with Valor and the Combat Infantryman's Badge. The Bronze Star is the fourth highest award that the Department of Defense gives for bravery, heroism, and meritorious service. For his service he earned a promotion to Captain and was assigned as Commander, Company A 1st Battalion, 168th Infantry of the Iowa National Guard.

The bravery and sacrifice displayed by Captain Vandewater goes above and beyond what we are asked of as citizens of this country. I commend CPT Lee J. Vandewater's courageousness and service to our great Nation. It is an honor to represent him in the United States Congress, and I know my colleagues join me in wishing Captain Vandewater safety and success in his future service.

STOP CHILD ABUSE IN RESIDENTIAL
PROGRAMS FOR TEENS
ACT OF 2008

SPEECH OF

HON. CHARLES B. RANGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 24, 2008

Mr. RANGEL. Madam Chairman, I rise today to express my support of the Stop Child Abuse in Residential Programs for Teens Act of 2008, introduced by Representative GEORGE MILLER.

The bill H.R. 5876 provides American teenagers with security and safety in residential programs. The passage of the bill is crucial for the American Education System and American society. Many times residential programs

leave teenagers without necessary attention and care, which can lead to abuse, harm and even death of children. It is critical to address this problem now. Through various requirements and changes, The Stop Child Abuse in Residential Programs Act will significantly improve residential programs for children. This important legislation will better the lives of many young Americans by making them safer and healthier.

U.S. Government can not allow further abuse and neglect of teenagers in private or public residential programs. Members of Congress must understand how crucial Stop Child Abuse in Residential Programs for Teens Act is and must strongly support its enactment. In taking action to enact this proposed legislation today we will send a strong message that this abuse must stop.

HONORING THE LIFE OF ROBERT
MONDAVI

SPEECH OF

HON. GEORGE RADANOVICH

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 24, 2008

Mr. RADANOVICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise to support H. Con. Res. 365, which my fellow co-chair of the Congressional Wine Caucus, MIKE THOMPSON and I introduced in remembrance of a friend and giant in the California and international wine community, Robert Mondavi, who passed away in May of this year.

Robert may most be remembered for his tremendous success in producing and promoting California wines to the international community. After graduating from Stanford, Robert joined his family in running the Charles Krug winery in Napa, and then went on to found the Robert Mondavi Winery in 1966.

His tireless efforts to introduce California wine to the world and compete against established European wines are much of the reason why winemaking in California is now an 18 billion dollar industry—the largest retail wine market in the world. In fact, the United States accounts for 61 percent of wine sold in the world. This would not be possible without the lifetime of hard work by Robert Mondavi.

He was also extremely involved in charitable causes across the country to promote wine, food and the arts.

Robert Mondavi was an inspiration to my own winemaking ventures as I'm sure he was to many boutique winemakers across the country. Such inspiration has led to wine being produced in all 50 States. His innovation, spirit and passion for winemaking will be sorely missed throughout our Nation and the world.

RECOGNIZING HIGH SCHOOL VAL-
EDICTORIANS OF GRADUATING
CLASS OF 2008

SPEECH OF

HON. GREGORY W. MEEKS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, June 23, 2008

Mr. MEEKS of New York. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize and honor the achievements of America's high school valedictorians and the graduating class of 2008.